

I oppose the kill motion. I cannot say that I endorse the language of LB 565 in its current form in all particulars, in fact, in committee we tried to wrangle over a narrowing of that language with respect to telephone records to make sure that what we were talking about was simply the telephone number itself as opposed to the amount of the charge, the date of the call, or perhaps even the phone exchange. However, I find that I am alone, perhaps, in my desire to be reasonable. At the hearing when we had representatives of the press, the representative for the media of Nebraska, the representative of the media of Nebraska would not acknowledge the principle that the correspondence of the State Legislature should remain confidential, that my correspondence which I receive from my constituents and that which I send to my constituents should be releasable only on the permission of those two parties, myself or the person to whom I am sending the letter or from whom I have received the letter. I regard that as a very unreasonable position to take. Perhaps it is because the media of Nebraska can perceive no other viable social value to outweigh the need for information, including the value of privacy, including the right of a confidential communication between a constituent and their elected representative about matters of public policy or private interest. Senator Higgins has had any number of letters which she has revealed on the floor of the Legislature from constituents telling stories of very dire personal circumstances. Hopefully, she has had the release of all of those citizens when she has read those letters. Of course, it was her choice. I would feel...I would feel remiss if I did not protect the constituents who wrote me in that same vein from the release of their personal life stories as they related to issues before this Legislature or under consideration before this Legislature. In other words, while I am prepared to be reasonable on the matter of what should or should not be made public, I find that the opponents of LB 565 are not reasonable, they are absolutistic in their thinking, and, secondly, what we do by supporting Senator Hoagland's motion is to remain in limbo for yet another year with our recent Attorney General's Opinion which states that our correspondence is an open public record. I do not think my constituents believe that if they write me, the letters that they send to me are open for the inspection of any citizen of the State of Nebraska. I believe they write those letters under the belief that they are communicating confidentially with their representative who will take into account the delicacy, the nature of those letters and do with them only that which would not bring discredit or newsworthiness or notoriety to the writers of those letters. For that reason, I cannot